FOREST ADMINISTRATION REPORT OF THE SOUTHERN CIRCLE, BOMBAY PRESIDENCY, FOR THE YEAR 1891-92.

INTRODUCTION.

The year has been an eventful one on account of the general distress that prevailed owing to a scanty rainfall throughout the monsoon of 1891. This scarcity has, during a greater part of the year, prevailed over the whole Southern Marátha Country. In amelioration of the calamity, the forests of the several districts were opened to free grazing.

2. There have been no changes in the system of administration hitherto observed in this Circle and recorded in past years.

3. The area finally settled in Kánara during the year under report amounted to 27 square miles. Settlement inquiries connected with 277 square miles in Kánara and 27 square miles in Dhárwár were conducted during the year.

4. The Forest Survey Party was working in Kánara and Dhárwár, and 300 square miles were surveyed at a cost of Rs. 35,138.

5. The work accomplished by the Working Plan Parties covered 116 square miles in the forests of the Northern Division of Kánara, for a portion of which the working plans will be submitted during the current year.

6. The permanent establishments underwent no change during the year, except in the Kolába Division, to which were added the two Ranges of Karjat and Khálápur along with their establishment, from the South Thána Division of the Northern Circle, which is also a notable occurrence of the year under report.

7. Protection against forest offences was fair, the percentage of the offences prosecuted being 22 against 26 of the preceding year. Eight hundred and three cases were compounded under Section 67 of the Forest Act, and a sum of Rs. 2,216 was recovered as compensation for damages. One hundred and five magisterial cases were pending trial at the close of the year; of these no less than 97, for pollarding reserved trees in unsettled Government forests, appertain to the Southern Division of Kánara.

8. The number of cattle impounded for trespassing in closed forests amounted to 4,283.

9. Special measures of fire protection were adopted as usual in the three Divisions of Kánara, in Belgaum and in Dhárwár. The results compare favourably with those of the previous years in spite of a dry and unfavourable year.

10. Natural-reproduction, though not everywhere satisfactory, appears to have been as good as in the previous year, and this was benefited by the special measures of fire protection.

11. "Communications and Buildings" received attention as usual, and a sum of Rs. 6,809 was spent under this head during the year under report.

12. As regards forest revenue, the year has not been a prosperous one as was only to be expected, owing to the prevailing scarcity which in a great measure affected the market in the timber-consuming districts.

13. The gross revenue of the year was Rs. 11,47,707, which may be called very fair considering the general conditions of the year.